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● KNOW YOUR QUR'AN : ALLAH'S LAST REVEALED BOOK

Syed Tahzeeb-ul-Hasan

● RAMADHAN — THE MONTH OF FASTING

M. W. Gazdar

● THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN ISLAM

Dr. H. M. Kotwal



ISLAMIC CENTRE, KARACHI

وصى الحسن انصارى

اشاعت اسلام (۵) وسط ایشیا، افغانستان

زندگی کے سارے سُکھ، صحت اور تن دُرستی سے ہیں



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ہمدرد

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آپ ہمدا دوست ہیں۔ ہمدرد کے ساتھ معنویات ہمدرد خدیوہ ہیں۔ ہمدرد نے بین الاقوامی
شہر علم و معنویت کی تعمیر میں لگ رہا ہے۔ اس کی تعمیر میں آپ بھی شریک بنیں۔



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

THE MINARET

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Organ of
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Maulana Shah Muhammed Abdul Aleem Siddiqui Al-Qaderi (R.A.)
and
Maulana Dr. Muhammed Fazl-ur-Rahman Al-Ansari Al-Qaderi (R.A.)

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CALL FROM THE MINARET

By

Dr. Maulana Muhammad Fazl-ur-Rahman
Al-Ansari Al-Qaderi (R.A.)

PURSUIT AND NON-ASCETIC CHARACTER OF SPIRITUALITY

- * The Qur'anic ethico-religious Approach does not lead to mysticism, but to what might be termed as *Dynamic Purism* based on *Sidq* and *Safa*. That is the goal and the pride of the orthodox *Sufi* orders in history. They pursued the Qur'anic ethico-religious quest with grace and sincerity, — a quest that is the very essence of Islam.
- * The ultimate goal of the Qur'anic ethico-religious quest is God-realization. But, its pursuit is impossible without self-realization, which, therefore, becomes a Muslim's primary obligation.
- * The struggle for self-realization emerges in the Qur'anic perspective as basically three-dimensional: the religious, the ethical, and the intellectual.
- * In spite of the fact, however, that it is to be undertaken fundamentally as the first step in the exercise of God-realization, it leads simultaneously to a knowledge which might be named as the 'knowledge of Spiritual Science'. That knowledge is scientific, because it is based, like physical science, on observation and verification. The para-psychologists of today, working at the psychical level alone, have affirmed the ESP, the astral projection, etc. But, Spiritual Science, in the hands of genuine *Sufi* teachers, has attained immeasurably greater heights. The revelation by men like Rumi and Ibn al-Arabi of certain higher truths discovered only recently by physical science, is a case in point.
- * It is the *bid'at* (i.e; 'spiritual' practices that violate Islam) and superstitions that should be condemned by every genuine Muslim. But, to condemn the Spiritual Science itself is unwarranted.
- * Prayer and Fasting play very definite roles in the Qur'anic Spiritual Culture.
- * Prayer is an exercise in respect of the Communion of the finite with the Infinite. It extricates the finite individual from servitude to the finite and opens to him the road to infinite progress. Prayer is thus for progress. Fasting is the exercise in self-control, which is the key to spiritual progress.
- * The enemies of Islam have propagated the allegation that, because of its permission of polygamy, the Qur'an teaches sex-indulgence, which does not harmonise with the pursuit of spiritual refinement and progress. Actually, that allegation is based on the age-old

misconception of Ascetic ethics, wherein the very fulfilment of the natural biological demand of sex is considered to be unholy, in contra-distinction to the Qur'anic view, which holds it as sacred, because it is in conformity with the Divine Scheme, and which condemns only licentiousness as unholy. Thus, the qualified and restricted Qur'anic permission for polygamy has not been prescribed as a licence for sex-indulgence but only as an alternative to promiscuity and prostitution, — which it eliminates successfully, in sharp contrast with the Ascetic as well as the Totally-Monogamic social philosophies. As for the former, one has to read only the history of Christianity in the Age of Faith to witness the most ugly storm of licentiousness that overtook even the pursuers of saintliness, not to speak of the common folk. (Besides other literature on the subject, the "*History of Sacerdotal Celibacy in the christian Church*" written by a very devout Christian scholar named Henry C. Lea, published by the University Books Inc; U.S.A., 1966, is enough to provide a correct estimate of the moral disaster perpetrated by the wrong philosophy). Coming to the latter, the modern Western civilization has established the most heinous record of licentiousness, — a record unsurpassed in the history of human civilizations.

- * The enemies of Islam extend their allegation to the person of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be on him!) also, and that to such an extent as to deny to him, with all his superbly-great qualities of character, even basic spiritual goodness and greatness, simply on the basis of his practice of polygamy. But, what are the facts? *Firstly*, his entire personal life was a life of war against ease, opulence, luxuries, and self-indulgence in general. Indeed, it was through and through a life of Austerity, wherein, even at the height of his material power, he lived in a small thatched mud-hut, passed his days in hunger and toil, and spent his nights for the most part standing in prayer to God. *Secondly*, he adopted polygamy towards the dawn of old age, having led an exemplary monogamous life from the age of twentyfive to the age of fifty in the company of a twice-widowed lady who was fifteen years his senior. *Thirdly*, during the polygamous period, while there was a wife like Lady Ayesha, who was a virgin of seventeen at the time of the consummation of marriage, there were those who were widows or divorcees, and there were even those who, at the time of their marriage with him, were already so old as to have crossed the limit of fitness for married life. All these facts demolish the very basis of the aforesaid insinuation completely, and establish, instead, the truth that the Holy Prophet (Peace be on him!) adopted polygamy in the Medinite period of his life *solely* for the sake of his noble and sacred mission, — and that in the perspective of a twofold achievement. *Firstly*, in the tribal society of Arabia of those days, wherein one of the fundamental conditions of the success of his mission lay in the unification of the mutually-hostile tribes, one of the most potent instrument of their unification, in accordance with the mentality of the Arabs of those days, consisted in uniting them through a kinship centred in his person, — and his marriages did make a signal contribution in that behalf. *Secondly*, through those different marriages he was able to build in the persons of his wives the most accomplished lady-teachers and embodiments of Islam for the propagation of Islamic knowledge among the womenfolk.

(To be continued)

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ (البقرة - ٢: ١٨٥)

The month of Ramadhan in which was revealed the Qur'an !

KNOW YOUR QUR'AN: ALLAH'S LAST REVEALED BOOK

By
Syed Tahzeeb-ul-Hasan

Q. What does the word Qur'an mean?

A. "To read", it also means "that which has been read".

Q. What kind of reading the Qur'an is?

A. It contains information about everything that has been created and exists in the universe. We should dig the knowledge out to benefit ourselves and the humanity.

Q. Does the Qur'an contain scientific facts too?

A. Yes. The Qur'an has everything including scientific facts. For example: it describes conception of human embryo, its development in fetus, and the whole life journey of human beings, in graphic details. It is a miracle.

Q. What is the predominant content of the Qur'an?

A. One third of the Qur'an describes Allah; explaining His Majesty, Power, Hold, Control and other Attributes.

Q. When was the Qur'an revealed?

A. In Lailat al-Qadr, an odd-numbered night of the last 10 nights of Ramadhan al-Mubarak.

Q. Where did the first Revelation come?

A. In the Cave of Hira, situated in the outskirts of Makkah.

Q. Which is the first revealed Message of the Qur'an?

A. *Iqra' bi Ism Rabbikal ladhi Kahalaqa* (Read in the name of your Lord. Who created.) (Verse 1: Chapter 96)

Q. What does this Message tell us?

A. It is asking us to acquire knowledge, which is the most important duty of each and every Muslim, men and women.

Q. Was the Qur'an revealed as "*ayahs*" (verses) or in form of *Suras* (chapters)?

A. Sometimes one or more *ayahs* were revealed. Other times whole *Suras* were revealed.

Q. Is the Qur'an compiled in the same order as it was revealed?

A. No. Its compilation is not in the revealed chronological order. The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) used to instruct its scribes to place a certain revealed *ayah* in a certain *surah*.

Q. How many scribes used to record the Qur'anic revelations?

A. Mainly three: Ali Ibn Abu Talib, Abdullah bin Masood and Zaid bin Thabit.

Q. Over what period of time was the Qur'an revealed?

A. It was revealed over a period of 23 years.

Q. When was the Qur'an collected in form of a Book, as we have it today?

A. In the life time of the Noble Prophet (s.a.w.s.).

Q. In terms of period of revelation, how many kinds of *ayahs* are in the Qur'an?

A. They are of two types—Makki (revealed before Hijrah) and Madani (Revealed after Hijrah).

Q. In terms of message content, how many types of *ayahs* are in the Qur'an?

A. Two. *Muhkam* of which the meaning is clear and *Mutashabihat* of which the meaning is not clear, but can be understood with the help of *Muhkam* (clear) Verses.

Q. How many *Suras* does the Qur'an have?

A. 114 *Suras*.

Q. Which is the first Sura of the Qur'an?

A. Surah *Al-Fatehah*, also known as *Al-Hamd*.

Q. Which is the last Sura of the Qur'an?

A. Surah *al-Na'as* (The People).

Q. Which is the largest Sura of the Qur'an?

A. Surah *Al-Baqara*, the Cow, second Sura.

Q. Which is the shortest Sura of the Qur'an?

A. Sura *Al-Kauthar*, Sura No. 108.

Q. How many *ayahs* are there in the Qur'an?

A. About 6236 *ayahs*.

Q. Which is the largest *ayah* in Qur'an?

A. Ayat No. 282 of Surah *Al-Baqara*.

Q. Which Sura is known as Umm Al-Kitab (Mother of the Book)?

A. Surah *Al-Fateha* is known as Umm Al-Kitab, because in essence it contains the entire Qur'an.

Q. Which Surah is known as the heart of Qur'an?

A. Surah *Al-Yaseen*.

Q. Which Surah is known as Uroos (bride) of the Qur'an?

A. Surah *Al-Rahman*.

Q. Does every Surah begin with *Bismillah ir Rahman ir-Raheem*?

A. Yes, every Surah begins with *Bismillah ir-Rahman ir-Raheem*, except Surah *Al Bar'at*, also known as Surah *Al-Taubah*.

Q. Does the *Bismillah ir-Rahman ir-Raheem* appear 113 times in the Qur'an?

A. No, it appears 114 times. Though Surah *Al-Bar'at* does not start with it, it appears twice in Surah *An-Naml*, once at the beginning, then in the text of the Surah.

Q. Are any Prophet mentioned by their names in the Qur'an?

A. Yes. The names of 25 Prophets appear in it.

Q. Are any of the Surahs named after Prophets?

A. Yes six Surahs. They are Yunus, Hud, Yusuf, Ibrahim, Muhammad and Nuh (Peace be upon them all).

Q. Which Surah has been named after one of the most pious ladies?

A. Surah *Al-Maryam*.

Q. How many Surahs have been named after animals?

A. Two. Cow and Elephant.

Q. How many Surahs have been named after insects?

A. Three. They are named as Bee, Ant and Spider.

Q. Is any of the Surahs named after fruit?

A. Yes. Surah Al-Teen (fig).

Q. Which is the most used alphabet in the Qur'an?

A. "Alif" is most used alphabet in the Qur'an.

Q. We find some surahs start with an alphabet or a combination of them, which are unintelligible to us. What are they?

A. They are known as Huroof Muqatta'at.

Q. Are Huroof Muqatta'at meaningless alphabets?

A. No. They contain very deep meanings.

Q. Are all the alphabets used as Huroof Muqatta'at?

A. No. Out of 28 Arabic alphabets only 14 have been used in this manner. These 14 alphabets are called Noorani too.

Q. How many Surahs begin with Huroof-e Muqatta'at?

A. 29 Surah.

Q. We find Surahs have been named after animals, insects and fruit. They are also named after Light, Star, Moon, Iron, Sun, Night, Time, Dawn etc; common and ordinary day-to-day matters and things. What does it allude to?

A. The Qur'an deals with day-to-day matters of our life, hence we should seek its guidance in the conduct of our routine life affairs.

Q. Is the Qur'an a Book of guidance?

A. Surely it is. It leads its followers to success.

Q. How can they achieve success?

A. By reading the Qur'an, understanding it, reflecting on its Message, and practicing it in their daily life.

Q. Can the Qur'an guide us in this sophisticated technological age too?

A. Of course. The message of the Qur'an is for all the ages till the end of this world. It is as valid and current today, as it was when it was revealed.

Q. Does the Qur'an guide each and every one of its readers?

A. It guides all those who are sincere in seeking guidance. Those, who adopt an attitude of mockery towards it, the Qur'an adds to their perversity.

Q. Does it mean different people draw different information from the Qur'an?

A. Yes. As one's *Taqwa* (piety) increases so the Message becomes clearer.

Q. What is the Qur'anic definition of success?

A. Those who have right faith and do good deeds, they are successful people.

Q. Are some people created superior to others? Have they been given better chances to succeed?

A. No. The Qur'an is very emphatic that all people are created equal. There is no superiority based on race, colour, sex, wealth or place of birth. Each individual is given equal opportunity to succeed.

Q. Does it mean that all people are equal?

A. Though people are created equal, they can gain superiority through *Taqwa*. A person who is more obedient to Allah is superior to one who is less obedient or who disobeys Him. The Qur'an distinguishes people.

Q. Besides obeying Allah, who else should we obey?

A. Our first duty is to worship Allah, as per the guidance given to us by Muhammad (s.a.w.s), the last Prophet (s.a.w.s.) of Allah. Next is obedience to our parents. They are to be obeyed in all matters, except if they ask us to associate anything with Him (Allah).

Q. What is the Qur'anic overview of life in this world?

A. Life in this world is transient. We are here to strive for the next, permanent life. In this life, we should do only those actions, which may improve and ascertain a better hereafter for us.

Q. What is the Qur'anic agenda of human life?

A. This life has been given to us with some definite purpose, which is not just making a living. Our living needs have been taken care of by our Creator, before He created us. We need not worry about them. Rather, we should try to find the purpose of our creation and achieve it.

Q. Does it mean whatever we desire, we shall be provided by Him?

A. No. He guarantees our needs in this life. He shall provide us whatever we desire (and much more), in the next life, if we merit it through our belief and actions.

Q. Can the Qur'an be imitated?

A. No. The Qur'an has challenged all the human-beings and Jinns to produce even one small sura like it has. About 1400 years have passed and the challenge still stands.

(Continued on page No. 26)

RAMADHAN THE MONTH OF FASTING

By
M. W. Gazdar

The root meaning of Ramadhan is "Excessiveness of heat" derived from Ramadhan. Muslims named this month according to the seasons in which they fall. It is the ninth month in the Muslim year, which consists of 354 days, being based upon lunar movement. That is why this month falls sometimes in summer and sometimes in winter. Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Do not fast until you see the new moon and do not break fasting until you see again." Jews, Christians and Hindus have a solar year, while Muslims follow a purely lunar calendar, consequently their month Ramazan rotates gradually in all the seasons of the year.

Fasting, the third of the five pillars of Islam, is of profound significance to Muslims all over the world. The Holy Qur'an says: "O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, even as it was prescribed for those before you — that haply ye may ward off (evil)" (2:183). According to the writer in the Encyclopaedia of Britannica: "The Practice of fasting has been recognised well nigh universally in all the higher, revealed religions though the same stress is not laid on it

in all, and the forms and motives vary. "Its modes and motives vary considerably according to climate, race, civilization and other circumstances but it would be unrecognised." Moses fasting for forty days previous to the receipt of revelation (Exodus 24:18), and Jesus keeping fast for forty days before he was called upon to take the office of prophethood (Mat. 4:2) shows that the gift of revelation comes in fasting. According to St. Mathew, "Moreover when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance... But then, when thou fastest anoint thy head and wash thy face." (6:16-17).

The writer of Encyclopaedia of Religions and Ethics writes: "The early Christians observed Lent. i.e. six weeks (Sundays exempted), that is 36 days were devoted to fasting and penitence in commemoration of Jesus Christ in the wilderness (Vol: V, p.769). That is why crudax remarked in his Bible Concordance that fasting in all nations was restored to in times of morning, sorrow and afflictions is born out by facts. Among the Jews generally David is mentioned as fasting for seven days, during the illness of his infant son, and as sign of

mourning, fasting is mentioned in I Samuel 3 : 13 and elsewhere. Besides the Day of Atonement which was prescribed by the Mosaic Law as a day of fasting, the people being required to "afflict" their souls to cleanse them of their sins, various other facts come into vogue after the Exile "in sorrowful commemoration of the various sad events which had issued in the downfall of the kingdom of Judah." It appears that the idea underlying this voluntary suffering in the form of a fast in times of sorrow and affliction seems to have been to propitiate angry and excite compassion in Him. Some fasted for the expiation of their sins; some as part of self immolation, which was regarded necessary for God realisation; some as a thanks giving if what they attempted, was achieved. The fast in these religions, like Jews, Christians and hindus, is based on rites and rituals. The fast (Apas) in Hindu religion is allowed to take every thing but should not eat cooked articles during fast. It was in Islam that the practice received a highly developed significance. It rejected the ideas of appeasing Divine wrath or exciting Divine compassion through voluntary suffering and introduced in its place regular and continuous fasting, irrespective of the condition of the individual or the nation, as a means like prayers to the development of the inner faculties of man. Though, the Holy Qur'an speaks of expiatory of compensatory fasts in certain cases of violation of the Divine Law, yet there are quite distinct from the obligatory fasting in the month of Ramadhan. Fasting is one of the five basic tenets of Islam. The Holy Prophet said: "Islam is raised on five pillars: the witness that there is no god but Allah, the witness that

Muhammad (peace be upon him) is His servant and His messenger, offering prayers, giving of Alms, fasting and performing the Pilgrimage." Fasting is a form of worship in Islam as such, it is exclusively for Allah. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) says: "All man's work belongs to him, but fasting belongs to Me and I repay." During the period of fasting from dawn until sunset, one must abstain from food, drink and sexual intercourse. Smoking, chewing or swallowing anything or taking medicine through the mouth or nose breaks the fast. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has said: "Allah prefers the smell of the mouth of the who fasts, to the smell of musk," and, "whoever breaks the fast for one day in Ramadhan, without any legitimate reason, cannot compensate for it by a period of fasting at another time during the year."

Islam gave a new and definite meaning to this religious institutions of fasting. Before Islam, the fasting meant the suffering or some privation in times of mourning and sorrow, in Islam it became an institution for the improvement of the moral and spiritual condition of man. Fasting in Islam does not only mean abstention from food but from every kind of evil. Most persons are of the opinion that if they miss their food for a day they are in danger of contracting some disease as a result of the lowered resisting powers of the body thus induced; therefore they say one must eat to keep up one's strength. They talk glibly about the need to keep up one's strength and generally speaking, they give the impression that the miss of a few meals is a step towards starving to death.

Communist paper of Tashkent writes "those who fast cause danger to their health. They upset their eating and sleeping habits and contract disease of the intestines. If a man does not eat at the right times he becomes weak. Such people despise their health. As a consequence they lose their capacity of work. They fall ill quickly and some older people even go blind through fasting. Pregnant woman cause damage to their children."

But in the study of the body and its needs and of foods and their purpose, scientists have long since proved that food energy is not immediately utilized, some of this is stored in the body and that this storage may be called upon to supply the body when needed. So no one need fear taking the fast of Ramadhan, no matter how weak, thin or emaciated he may be. Instead of being weakened by abstinence of food, it is common experience that there comes greater strength and energy. In fact abstention from food is only a step to make a man realise that if he can, in obedience to Divine injunctions, abstain from that which is otherwise lawful, how more necessary it is that he should abstain from the evil ways which are forbidden by God.

The organ of the Ministry of Culture of Uzbekistan Tashkent writes: "Religion prevents the Soviet Citizen from becoming sensible and active members of communist society. Communism and religion are enemies. Similarly, religion and science are enemies. In addition, the religion of Islam with its traditions and customs, is the enemy of Socialism and Science.

One of the traditions and customs of Islam is Ramadhan. This was already in existence before Islam, within the ancient Arabic roots. The lands of the ancient Arabs consisted of mountains and sandy. The summers were very hot and the temperature rose to very high. Plants withered through the heat. Cattle remained without fodder. Human beings died of famine and illness. Rivers dried up. Therefore the ancient Arabs were forced for a definite period to give up food and drink. Thus fasting by day and living at night became the custom. The Arabs hoped to Win their god's forgiveness by this through fasting they asked their gods for rain and to grow plants. In addition, it was impossible during the heat of the summer to do agricultural work. The Arabs carried out their work during night."

The above is a misleading statement which is made because of abysmal ignorance of the teachings of Islam. The Holy Qur'an says:

"Ramadhan is the month, in which we sent down the Qur'an, as a guide, to mankind, also clear (signs) for guidance and judgement, (between right and wrong). So everyone of you who is present (at his home), during that month should spend it in fasting. But if any one is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed period (should be made up) by days later. God intends every facility for you; He does not want to put you to difficulties. He wants you to complete the prescribed period. And to glorify Him. In that He has guided you; And perchance you shall be grateful.

There is a moral discipline underlying fasting, for it is the training ground where man is taught the greatest moral lesson of life as self restraint and piety are among the gifts of fasting. It teaches man to refrain from acts which may displease Allah, and to develop a sense of responsibility towards his fellowmen. When fasting, man comes to appreciate the clemency and grace of his Lord, and he learns to realise the need of the poor and the miserable. The charity towards the needy on Eid-ul-Fitr, at the end of Ramadhan, is necessary and is done joyfully and gratefully. Shah Waliullah (d. 1762 A.C.) in his work known Hujjatullah al-Baleghah writes: "Since the excess of animality hinders the emergence of the angelic aspects it was necessary that one should try to dominate one's animality. Since the excess of animality and the accumulation and abundance of its stratas have their origin in food, drink and indulgence in carnal pleasures, a fast accomplishes what abundant food cannot. Therefore, the method of dominating the animality is the diminishing of the causes (of the excess of animality). That is why there is unanimity among all those who desire the emergence of the angelic aspect in man about diminishing and reducing these (eating, drinking etc.) There is no difference in this prescription among the peoples of the world inspite the difference of their religions and the distance between their respective countries. Moreover the ultimate goal is that the animality of man should become submissive to man's angelic side, so that his animality acts according to the inspirations and dictates of his angelism, takes colour from its colour and his angelism prevents his

animality from taking mean and lowly colours and getting object impressions — like a wax getting the impression of a seal. To attain this, there is no method other than this. The angelic side of man should select something according to its own exigencies and should inspire and suggest this to the animal side of man: and that the animality should submit to this inspiration not act obstinately or rebel against it. Angelism should continue again and again to inspire its exigencies to the animality, and the animality should continue to submit to these exigencies, so that it becomes accustomed to them and proficient in them. The said exigencies which the angelism imposes and which the animality enforces willy-nilly, belong (1) either to the category of things which expand (delight) the angelic side and contract (depress) the animal one, such as the effort to resemble — so to say — world of god's super kingdom (malakut) and to regard (meditate) His superdomination (Jabarut) which is an exclusive peculiarity of the angelism, the animality being away, far away, from it; or (2) to the giving up of things which are the exigencies of the animality, whereby it is delighted and wherefore it carves in its extravagance. It is this latter category which constitutes the fasting.

It is not correct that the fasting is the enemy of science. Fasting as a remedy is fully in harmony with the philosophy of the causes of disease. Avicenna, the celebrated Muslim physician of the eleventh century often prescribed three week's fasting for his patients. He regarded fasting as specific cure in syphilis and small pox. At the time of the

French occupation, the Arabian hospitals of Egypt were reported to be securing radical cures of syphilis by fasting. Dr. Dewey writes: "Take away food from the sick man's stomach and you have begun to starve not the sick man but the disease." So the institution of fasting, achieves the almost impossible miracle, from a scientific point of view — of enforcing a primary scientific health measure under the spiritual observance.

Besides, the fasting of Ramadhan is the key to social emancipation. The person undergoing the fast is naturally inclined to spend most of his daytime in deep thinking and meditation. He is consciously forced to realise the teeming millions who are without food and drink. It also enables us to feel the sorry state of those who suffer pangs of hunger throughout the twelve months of the year. Thus the social conscience of the fasting man is awakened, his love and compassion are moved for his miserable brethren.

According to Dr. Mirza, Ramadhan did not merge suddenly in Arabia, but developed slowly and in the second century of Hijra, took the form of a institution. Ramadhan arose out of the extremely primitive agricultural work of production elements of the ancient Arabs and out of their weakness in the face of the forces of nature. Islam reformed Ramadhan.*

A resume of the speech of Mr. Habib Bourgciba, President of the Republic of Tunisia, on Fasting during the month of Ramadhan, and a plea for extension of

"classical" exemption from fasting under modern conditions is most surprising. The burden of his theme was: the fast diminishes the economic potential capacity of the Tunisian nation and, for that matter, of all the Muslim countries, it lessens the physical effort and is harmful to economic struggle for existence. He rebutted his critics by saying: "It has been said that I wish the civil servants not to fast. I have never done such a thing."

It is disheartening to note that the head of a Muslim country made such a misleading statement.

There are two forces in man, the forces of good and the forces of evils. They fight for supremacy over man. If the forces of good gain the upper hand, there is peace, harmony and happiness. But if the forces of evil gain the upper hand, there is discord and misery. Islam means peace. But so long as man is torn by internal conflict there can be no peace. This internal conflict can cease only when the forces of evil are suppressed and the forces of good are sublimated. Fasting is one of the methods by which this can be achieved, mere abstinence from food is not fasting; it is starvation. Fasting according to Islam, is abstinence from all that is evil. Fasting has a more physical value. The man who cannot face the hardship of life, who is not able to live, at times, without his usual comforts, cannot be said to be even physically fit for life on this earth. The moment such a man is involved in difficulty, as he must be every now and again, his

* The idea is not quite clear. The observance of the month of Ramazan for fasting began with its full splendour during the very lifetime of the Holy Prophet (P.b.u.h.).

strength is liable to give way. Fasting accustoms him to face the hardship of life, being in itself a practical lesson to that end and increases his powers of resistance.

There are even possible military advantages from the habits of fasting, for the soldier sometimes does not get food or drink and still he has to fight during the whole day and even late into the night. One who has the habit of fasting the whole month of Ramadhan, gets naturally greater aptitude for social structure imaginable. Its members, trained by such disciplines as fasting, represent the noblest character humanly possible. According to Dr. Rahat: "Fasting is practically the most powerful of all remedial measures. It enables one to get rid of toxins which may have accumulated within the body; it purifies the blood stream and renovates the entire system. While purifying and cleansing the body, fasting, at the same time, adds to the actual vital strength of the body by removing toxic material which, through its poisoning effect, is weakening the nerves of the body and the cells of the various organs. Therefore, when one is fasting during the month of Ramadhan or otherwise, one must remember that these pro-

cesses are taking place within the body during the fasting, giving a rejuvenating and revitalizing effect. "It is therefore not correct to say," it lessens the physical effort and is harmful.

The glory of Ramadhan is enhanced by the fact that it was in this month that the first verses of the Holy Qur'an were revealed to the Holy Prophet on Mount Hira. Holy Qur'an says: "The month of Ramadhan is that in which the Qur'an was revealed, a guidance to men and clear proofs of guidance and the criterion." (2:185)

The night in which the first Message was received in Ramadhan is specified as one of the odd nights in the last third of Ramadhan viz. 21st to 29th. This night is called "Laila-tul-Qadr" and is very holy for prayers and blessings. The Holy Qur'an says: Verily We! We have sent it down on the night of power. And what shall make thee know that which the night of power is! The night of power is better than a thousand months. The angels and the spirit descend therein by the command of their Lord with His decrees for every affair, (xxx:25).

تمام مسلمان بھائیوں اور بہنوں سے التماس ہے کہ

عطیات // صدقات // زکوٰۃ

"المركز الإسلامي" بی۔ بلاک شمالی ناظم آباد۔ کراچی کو عطا فرمائیں۔

(بانی صدر ڈاکٹر مولانا محمد فضل الرحمن الانصاری القادری)



ISLAM RELIGION OF PEACE

By
Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi

The name *Islam* and the Arabic word for peace, *salam*, both come from the same root, *salama* which indicates peace. So we may say that Islam and peace are twins. This peace and tranquility pervades the whole structure of Islam.

The Muslims greet each other by saying *salamun 'alaykum* (Peace be on you). It is a much better way of greeting than the old *an 'im sabahan* or the modern *sabaha 'l-kahyr* (Good morning). The ritual prayer of Islam ends on peace, when the Muslims say: *as-salamu 'alaykum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh* (Peace be on you, and mercy and blessings of Allah). In Islam, one of the names of God is *Salam*; many Muslims address Him in these words after every prayer: *Allahumma anta's-salam wa minka's-salam wa ilayka ya'udu's-salam* (O Allah! You are Peace; from You originates peace and to You it returns). That is why the final abode which Allah has provided for the believers, and to which He invites them, is called *daru 's-salam* (the abode of peace). The Qur'an says: They shall have the abode of peace with their Lord. (6:127) And Allah invites to the abode of peace. (10:25). And when

they shall reach that final destination, they shall be greeted by the angels in these words: Peace be on you, because you were patient; how excellent is then the issue of the abode. (13:24)

Peace based on Justice

If we want to study Islamic peace, we shall have to do so in the framework of the overall Islamic ideology. Islam is, in a manner of speaking, a single entity. We should not look at any Islamic concept in isolation; we must have the whole structure in view.

We may describe the whole Islamic ideology in one word: Justice. God has laid the foundation of Islam on justice. Justice has been defined as "putting a thing in its rightful place." A judge does justice when he awards or restores a disputed item to its rightful owner.

This brings us to the concept of peace. When every thing is kept in its rightful place, when every member knows not only his rights but also his duties towards others, then peace reigns in society, and the society

works smoothly like a well-balanced watch. It is what we call balance, harmony and equilibrium.

Man as a member of Society

Man in his life comes into contact with countless persons, groups and things. His relationship with some is amiable; with some others, antagonistic. Whatever the case, he has to base all his contacts, all his dealings, on justice—thus ensuring peace and happiness in society.

But before that, he has to do justice to his own self, his own soul, and to all the powers and faculties which God has bestowed upon him. Unless and until he maintains a balance between his desire and anger, he cannot do justice to others.

Desire and Anger

There are two characteristics which man shares with animals. They are "desire" and "anger." He is attracted to what he thinks is useful and beneficial to him; he wants to obtain or keep the things which give him pleasure and joy; he wants to remain near those people whom he loves. All these feelings are manifestations of the desire. Led by this factor, man is attracted towards food and drink, sleep and recreation; it is this factor that creates bond of love between parents and children, between husband and wife, between brothers and sisters, and between two relatives and friends. It is because of desire that man strives to achieve excellence in various fields of knowledge and arts; or to seek authority and power.

Anger is opposite of desire. Fear and courage are two manifestations of anger. It is because of this faculty that man repulses or tries to remove whatever he thinks would be harmful to him or whatever displeases him.

Man shares these faculties with animals. A cow welcomes green grass and runs away from a lion. If these were the only characteristics of an, there would have been no difference between man and cow. But God has bestowed upon man another especial faculty which distinguishes him from the animal world, and that is "Reason." In Arabic language, reason is called 'aql' which literally means, a tie, a restraint.

It is reason that puts restraint on our desire and anger. Reason is the rope that keeps these two faculties confined within permissible limits. You see, desire and anger both are essential for safety of mankind and continuity of human race. But they must remain on a middle course. They should not be unnecessarily crushed, nor should they be left unfettered. They should be properly channeled, in order that they could achieve the goals for which they were created. This could be done only when desire and anger both are under the complete control of reason and divine law. In this way, they would remain on the middle course, would proceed in the right direction. This medium path is called *i'tidal* in Arabic; *i'tidal* is a derivative of 'adl' — justice.

In this way, when man gives predominance to reason, and reason maintains the desire and anger on the middle path, keeping harmony and equilibrium between all

his faculties and characteristics, man's psyche remains in peace with itself.

If, on the other hand, there is any deficiency in any of these faculties or if either exceeds the limit, then man loses his equilibrium, and becomes unjust to himself, and as a result, inflicts injustice to other members of the society.

The equilibrium between various psychological traits creates inner peace, which in its turn, brings peace in society. Of course, it is easier said than done. Our traditions say that this medium way of life, this middle path, is thinner than hair, sharper than sword, and hotter than fire. To proceed on this path without stumbling, without deviation, one needs God's help. Thus, we finally come to the concept of peace with God. "From You originates peace, and to You it returns."

There is a short treatise *Risalatul 'l-Huquq*¹. (The Charter of Rights) written by our 4th Imam, Ali Zaynul Abidin (peace be upon him), the great-grandson of the Prophet (upon whom be peace). In this booklet, the Imam has divided the things and persons (with whom man comes into contact, with whom he deals) into 50 categories. It begins with the rights of God on man; then the rights of man's soul on himself; then rights of various powers and organs of his body, like eyes, ears, hands and feet. Then come the rights of mother, father and children; of husband and wife; of other relatives. Then it proceeds to the rights of

neighbours, friends, teachers, students, employer and employee; the rights of advisor, of one whom you advise, creditors and debtors. It goes on until it reaches to the rights of your adversary on you. It is a gem of Islamic ethics, and it may be adopted even by non-Muslims scholars of ethics — if one has the will to do so.

Before going ahead, I should mention an important principle of Islamic ideology, and that is the inter-relation of Islamic Laws and Islamic Ethics. Islamic Laws teach the minimum a person is required to do, and transgression of which entails sin and is sometimes considered a crime. Islamic Ethics' takes a man from that starting point to the highest peak of spiritual perfection. If a man is sick and weak, he first needs special regimen of diet, exercise and medicine to restore his body, to bring him to the peak of his health and strength. The same principle applies in the spiritual field. Islamic Laws keep man free from ills of sin and crime, while Islamic Ethics show him the way to noble spiritual perfection and strength. From Islam's point of view, it is not enough to merely ordain some basic laws to protect the believers from sins, and leave them at that. A weak patient, even when cured of a disease is an easy target of further attacks unless his strength is restored. Nor has Islam merely exhorted its followers to strive to reach high moral standards, without prescribing some rules to prevent them from negative influences. Of what use will be tonics if body is riddled with debilitating diseases? Thus, Islamic Laws and Islamic

1. *Risalat-ul-Huquq* was translated by me some 20 years ago and was published in Pakistan; its new edition has recently been published in Canada.

Ethics are inter-linked; they are different stages of the same spiritual journey. Islam knows that spiritual level of all people is not the same. Therefore, it has chosen for us the highest ethical and spiritual ideals, and exhorted us to strive hard to reach the summit; at the same time it has laid down minimum requirements which one cannot transgress except by exposing himself to spiritual peril.

Many Orientalists who are generally oblivious or even ignorant of this inter-relation of the Islamic Laws and Islamic Ethics, take it upon themselves to pronounce judgment on Islam, unfavourably comparing its Laws (i.e. the minimum requirements) with "the highest ethical standpoints" of christianity; and then pontificating that Islamic "moral teachings" have "shortcomings"¹.

Now I would like to mention a few of the rights that others have on us — in other words, our duties towards others.

Let us begin with the beginning of all; i.e. God. Islam by its very definition is submission to Allah. A Muslim should forget his ego or self; he should submerge his thoughts and actions to the will of Allah. That is the "just" relationship between the Creator and the created. Some of us obey Allah's commands because they are afraid of the hell — this is the lowest level; and, according to 'Ali (a.s.), it is like the obedience of slaves. Others worship Allah in the hope of going to the paradise — it is a bit higher,

and the above-mentioned tradition of 'Ali (a.s.) equates it with traders mentality. But the ideal worship and obedience is that which springs and emanates from the love of Allah.

When man reaches that stage, then he is neither afraid of the hell nor cares for the paradise. His whole being is immersed into the love of Allah. Of course, it does not make him oblivious of his shortcomings and he feels apprehension — not of hell, but of Allah's displeasure. At the same time, he remains confident and optimistic because he knows Allah is Merciful. Neither his hope exceeds his fear, nor does his fear exceed his hope. These well-balanced feelings create equilibrium, transquility and peace in his inner self, or as they say, in his heart.

It will not be out of place to quote here a short paragraph from a well-known supplication, called *Du 'a' Kumayl*. It is a long invocation, regularly recited by many Muslims every week. It was taught by 'Ali (a.s.) to his companion, Kumayl ibn Ziyad. In this supplication, the reciter, after confessing his sins and transgressions, asks Allah for His forgiveness and pardon. Then he expresses his hope that Allah would not punish him, because He, being the Creator, knows that His servant's body cannot endure even this world's transient pains; so how can it endure next world's punishment. Then comes the paragraph in which the servant asks his Lord:

Therefore, my Lord! if You will subject me

1. See, for example, G. Margoliouth's introduction to J.M. Rodwell's translation of *The Koran* (London: Everyman's Library, 1974) p.viii.

to the penalties in company of Your enemies, and cast me with them, and keep me away from Your friends and those who will be near to you, then, my God! my Lord! my Master! suppose I may patiently bear Your punishment, but how can I calmly accept being kept away from You? And suppose I may patiently endure the scorching fire, yet how can I resign myself to the denial of Your mercy?

Here we find the love and fear of Allah radiating from every sentence. And this is the Islamic ideal of man's relation with God, where the servant loves only God and fears only denial of God's favor.

After this, Islam has very clearly demarcated mutual rights and duties of family members and other relatives.

The above-mentioned *Risalatul 'l-Huquq* says about the rights of father: "It is the right of your father to realize that he is your root and you are his branch; and that without him you would have been non-existent. Therefore, whenever you find in yourself anything likeable, remember that your father is the basic means of that gift [of Allah] to you. And be thankful to Allah and grateful to your father accordingly."

About mother it says: "It is the right of your mother that you should appreciate that she carried you as nobody carries anyone, fed you the fruits of her heart which nobody feeds anyone, protected you [during the pregnancy] with her ears, eyes, hands, legs, hairs, limbs [in short] with her whole being, gladly cheerfully and carefully; suffering pa-

tiently all the worries, pain, difficulties and sorrows till the hand of God removed you from her and brought you into this world.

"Then she was most happy feeding you, forgetting her own hunger, clothing you, even if she herself had no clothes; giving you milk and water, not caring for her own thirst; keeping you in the shade, even if she had to suffer from the heat of the sun; giving you every comfort with her own hardships; lulling you to sleep while keeping herself awake..."

Allah joins parents' obedience to His worship and thankfulness in three places in the Qur'an, implying that if a servant was obedient and thankful to Allah, but did not do good to his parents. Allah would not accept His worship from that servant. Allah says in the Qur'an:

And worship Allah and join not any partner with Him and do good to the parents ... (4:36) And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him, and that you be kind to parents...(17:23) *Be thankful to Me and to your parents...* (31:14)

It will not be out of place to mention that in Islam the rights of the mother are three times greater than the rights of the father. But the shortage of time prevents me from going into further details.

Then the *Risalah* has laid down the neighbours' rights on each other. Here too the minimum rights have been given as follows:

"It is the right of your neighbour to safeguard [his interest] in his absence, and respect him in his presence, and to help and assist him in both situations. Do not look for his [hidden] shame and do not dig into his affairs to know his disgrace. And if you come to know it inadvertently without looking for it, then you should become an impregnable castle to [hide] what you have learned and a thick cover for it, so much so that if spears penetrated into your heart to detect it, they could not touch it. Do not eavesdrop on him when he is not on guard. Do not leave him in hardship and do not envy him in his comfort. Forgive his faults and forego his slips. And if he behaves with you disgracefully, you should not forget your forbearance, but deal with him peacefully. Be his shield against the tongue of abuse and protect him from the treachery of those who pose as sincere to him [but are not]. And live with him a graceful life."

And the highest standard of the neighbour's rights is shown in a tradition of the Prophet (s.a.w.) who has said: "Gabriel kept advising me to be generous to the neighbour, until I thought that probably Allah would prescribe for him a share in inheritance."

The *Risalah* says about wealth: "It is the right of the wealth that you should not obtain it except by lawful means, and do not spend it but in lawful ways. And, when the wealth is from Allah [as all wealth is] do not use it but to [reach] Allah and to make it a way of Allah..."

This is the minimum which, if

neglected, would put man in perdition. Its high point is reached when man sacrifices his own needs for the sake of others, gives preference to others even when he himself is in need of it. Allah says in the Qur'an: "and they prefer others over themselves even though poverty be their portion." (59:9)

Leaving all other categories aside, I would like to briefly mention the rights of some adversaries from that Charter:

Right of a claimant in a lawsuit: "... If his claim against you is correct, then do not try to break his argument and do not labour to refute his claim. Instead, you should be your own adversary in his favour, and be the judge against yourself, and be his witness for his claim without any need of other witnesses, because it is the duty imposed upon you by Allah.

"If his claim is wrong, then deal with him gently and put the fear [of Allah] in his heart and adjure him by his religion and dull his wrath against you by reminding him of Allah..."

And what are your rights on him? It is addressed in these words: Rights of a defendant: "If your claim against him is correct, then talk with him benevolently in describing that claim, because the sound of a claim itself is harsh enough [so do not add to it the rudeness of your language too]; and explain your arguments gently; give him time, make your talk clear, and deal with him kindly..."

If both parties of a conflict follow these

rules, no dispute can ruin the society's peace.

Then the Imam mentions the "Rights of One who was unjust to you." He writes:

"... If he did so knowingly and intentionally, then forgiveness is more suitable for you because it will weed out the enmity between you two. And further, there are many people like him in this world, and it is better to deal with them with good grace..."

As I mentioned before, these are the minimum rights which cannot be violated. But the same Imam has guided us to the peak of the moral standard in another place. In one of his famous invocations, called *Makarim 'ul-akhlaq* (The Noble Virtues), Imam Zaynul Abidin prays to Allah:

"O Allah! Send blessings on Muhammad and his progeny, and help me so that I wish well to him who works secretly against me; and treat him with kindness who forsakes me; and reward him generously who harms and injures me; and per-

form all my obligations to him who violates the ties of kinship; and in return speak well of him who backbites me; and that I be thankful for good and overlook evil."

If a society is based on such a foundation, then obviously it will be a heaven of peace. As everyone's rights and duties will be clearly demarcated, it will leave no room for friction and strife. When man has established peace with his Creator, within his own soul and body, with his family and relatives, with his neighbours and friends, and even with his adversaries, then surely PEACE will reign over the world. And it will not be a peace imposed by some outside forces, but a peace which will spring from people's inner selves, from the collective character of the society.

Keeping these moral values in their true perspective, man can change this world into a better world, where human dignity would prevail, universal brotherhood would flourish, and lasting peace would reign.

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DECEMBER, 1999

THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN ISLAM

*By the late Dr. H. M. Kotwal – Graduate of the Aligarh University,
President and founder of the Muslim Assembly (Cape)*

Allah Almighty in His Infinite Wisdom and Mercy grants women a status like everything else in Islam, a status in TAWHID i.e. The Oneness of Allah Almighty. Her status in life as a human being, like any male human being, is the same. But in the view of her different physical equipment and her role in life, she has rights, responsibilities and duties pertaining to her distinct role as a woman. Her relationship to her male counterpart, is like everything else in TAWHID, in a healthy balance. Her vital role as a mother makes her the backbone of humanity. Allah Almighty's Rasul, Muhammad (P.b.u.h.), emphasized this when he stated that heaven lies at the feet of the mother, for it is the mother to whom the child first turns for every need and it is the mother who is the first teacher of the child.

The early years of childhood are the years, when the child can implement every good act to reap good habits, and good habits result in a healthy, good character and a healthy good character results in a successful destiny.

The world of humanity prior to the appearance of Muhammad Mustapha

(P.b.u.h.), was a world in which women had no established status. In every society of the whole world, women were subjugated and denied their status, even as a human being. Islam gives status to women with honour twice that of the male, twice that of the husband and twice that of the father is the honour of the mother. Twice that of the husband is the honour of the wife. Twice that of the brother is the honour of the sister. Twice that of the son is the honour of the daughter. In view of the gifts bestowed upon women by Divine Ordinance such as physical beauty, of voice, a greater capacity for shame and modesty, steadfastness and patience, her role is as the very heart of the home, which is the abode where one expects to find refuge and comfort from the trying challenges of each day.

Therefore Islam, as the Perfect and Eternal Message of Guidance for the whole of humanity grants a status to women in the spirit of Tawhid with crystal clear rights, unique to her being and her role in life. These rights are universal and eternal for all womanhood. These rights are entrenched in the very foundations of an Islamic outlook in life. Ignorance of the Din of Islam breeds and harbours godless fear, i.e. fear of anyone

and anything in creation, and this *godless fear is the root of all evil*. Ignorance of the Din of Islam makes a human being's outlook confused and his stance in life warped with ignorance and he succumbs to the wiles, whims and ambitious fancies that are borrowed from other sources of ignorance. The status of women in Muslim Society at present is the result of essentially ignorant values taken up from adverse religious, political and economic circumstances and man make ideologies.

The only shield for safeguarding humanity against ignorance and its triple products of evil, poverty and godless fear, is the cultivation of the total human personality in the Din of Islam, which is the Basic Equipment that each and every Muslim male and female must acquire in truthfulness. For without the lamp of Tawhid, the human personality grovels in the fogs of alien teachings, customs and traditions. The safeguard of the dignity and the respect and the modesty and shame of any human being lies in the essential teachings, simple practices of the Din of Islam, and not in the usages of alien outlooks, garbs and customs that paralyse the human intellect.

It is only when the human personality functions in Tawhid, that it becomes a receptacle in harmony with the Harmony of all harmonies - Allah Almighty, and thus it becomes a receptacle for the Blessings and Mercy of Allah Almighty, in that it receives guidance, vision with wisdom and protection. It is prevalent in our Age and Time in the dominant materially developed nations, where the trend and fashion is to emanci-

pate women by stripping her modesty and shame to a false position of total equality with man. It is a false position which distorts her sense of gracefulness, shame and modesty, defeating her true role in life, leaving her to naked exploitation and to a miserable perpetual state of insecurity and fear. Where Islam is just a formal practice of rituals and customs our poor women have been regimented to a status of social religious serfs, stifling all their expressions, depriving them as the backbone and nucleus of a healthy Ummah. Modesty and shame is the vital expression of the human personality, for imbibing true understanding, respect and love. It cannot be upheld by the paraphernalia of an alien custom and tradition. The Holy Quran gives crystal clear direction as to the principles of dress and covering of a woman living a life in Tawhid, together with her relationship with her closest of relatives. This in no way curtails her, in her worship of Allah Almighty, but on the contrary, enhances her honour and dignity as a woman.

Because of ignorance of the Din of Islam and its true spirit, present day Muslims have taken for granted alien customs which have shut up the backbone of the Ummah and have shut her out of the world around her, thereby, paralysing the most influential teachers of society, and that is the women of Islam.

The Messenger of Allah Almighty (P.b.u.h.) has stated that a man's most treasured gift is a virtuous wife who advises him on worldly and spiritual matters. An ignorant, secluded, house-arrested woman is un-

able to equip her offspring to face up to the challenges of life, for she herself needs to be taken care of.

Before the advent of Islam, all human societies practised rampant polygamy. Allah Almighty in His Infinite Wisdom grants humankind, an evolutionary path in which polygamy is disciplined and regularised. For Islam is a Guidance to all human beings in all ages and at all times, under all circumstances. In restricting polygamy Allah Almighty, in no uncertain terms, warns any Believer who partakes of such a Divine privilege ordained for man, that the relationship of multiple wives restricted to four, will have to be meted out with justice. Justice in Islam is an absolute social norm. If the Believer fears inability to uphold this condition, then The Creator in His Infinite Wisdom and Mercy reminds the Believer to restrict himself to one wife, which will be best for him.

Alien ideologies, in so called modern civilisation claim, the interest of the monogamistic social status for woman, but in its morality, practice permissiveness, rampant polygamy, debasing poor women with fanciful titles, mistresses, call girls, hostesses, which in most instances deprive poor women of motherhood and sisterhood. Now in this permissive, modern, man-made concept of human values, the free-will of man is used entirely for material success and excesses to cater for his whims and fancies for a false destiny of comfort and pleasure.

The Messenger of Allah, the illustrious Muhammad Mustapha (P.b.u.h.) has re-

minded the Believers, "The best among you are those who are good to your wives". "Paradise is at the feet of the mother," and the Holy Quran states: "They have rights similar to those against them" (Surah 2 verse 228). The Holy Quran states a common morality for both sexes in every respect and in most of the moral injunctions, the Holy Quran mentions them together. Women share equality before the Law and they are granted civil rights. Marriage is a civil contract between man and woman in which any lawful conditions may be inserted. A pre-nuptial contract may be drawn up to safeguard her. Women are granted a right of inheritance and Allah Almighty warns the Believers not to falter in this respect, for the price that is to be paid is an extreme one, that being condemned to hell. She has the right to own property in her own name.

Muslim women have made their mark in history as rulers, councilors, jurists and outstanding servants of Allah Almighty. They have played their role in assisting Muslim armies and have even commanded Muslim armies. The Islam of Muhammad (P.b.u.h.) gives clear and consistent proof of the fact that in the liberation of man, Islam does not forget women. A comparative study of legislation about the rights of women in different civilised nations and in this present age, would bear out the truth of these assertions.

The Believers therefore, must remember that, justice in Islam is an absolute social norm and that the mothers and sisters and the wives and daughters of the Ummah

are its first and most influential teachers and fountainheads of actions, habits for the development of character for a destiny as true Believers in Islam. The woman in Islam must also remember that as Muslims they themselves, each one and collectively, must take on the struggle to equip themselves to assert their rights with responsibilities and duties, fearing no one and nobody, except Allah Almighty, for these rights are Divinely Ordained and are meant to be asserted.

The Holy Quran is there to guide and inspire those who will strive constantly in the Glory and Majesty of Allah Almighty, in each and every aspect in life to live by Its Guidance and live by the examples of

Muhammad (P.b.u.h.). Allah Almighty will help them. For amongst them will arise Believers in the form of their fathers, brothers and sons who will enjoin and forbid what is wrong. Far too long has the Muslim world witnessed the consequence of tolerating ignorance, and all its consequent evils, especially in relation to the status of women in Islam. May Allah Almighty strengthen us all to respect our mothers and cherish their tender love, and may Allah Almighty strengthen all women in Islam to safeguard their modesty, gracefulness and shame, for these norms are great indicators to the quality of Iman that the individual and the society possess.

WALHAM DU LILLAHI RABBIL ALAMIN

(Continued from page No. 9)

Q. Can the Qur'an be changed or amended?

A. No. This is impossible. The Qur'an is in its original form, as it was revealed.

Q. Must we have Wudhu (ritual ablution) before we read The Qur'an?

A. We can read the Qur'an without Wudhu if we do not touch its Arabic text.

Q. Which Surahs have *wajib sajdahs*?

A. Suras As-Sajdah, Ha Mim, An-Najm, Al-Alaq.

Q. How many total sajdahs are in the Qur'an?

A. There are 15.

Q. What is the key Message of the Qur'an?

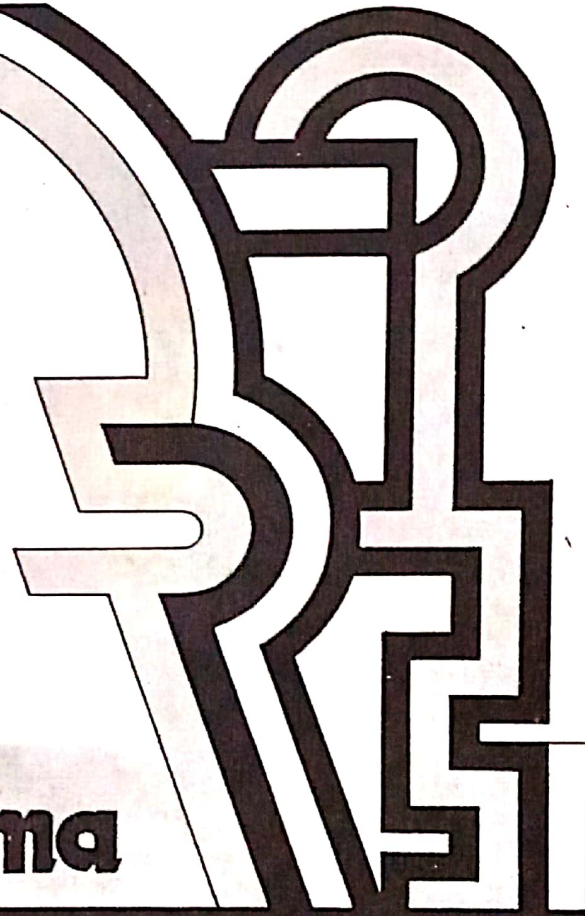
A. One should rely on Allah alone for everything, and should live the life to gain His pleasure, according to the instructions of Prophet Muhammad, (s.a.w.s.)



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پڑھنے لگا۔ شیخ کی اس کرامت کا لوگوں کے دل پر بہت اثر ہوا اور ایک روایت کے مطابق سب لوگ، جن کی تعداد ایک لاکھ ساٹھ ہزار تھی، حلقہ ہجوش اسلام ہو گئے۔

اسحاق ولی جو ایک برگزیدہ درویش تھے بارہ سال تک یار قند اور ختن کے علاقوں میں اشاعت اسلام کرتے رہے اور بڑی تعداد میں لوگوں کو بالخصوص خرگئی قبائل کے افراد کو مسلمان کیا۔

ترکی سردار سلجوق جو سلاطین سلجوقیہ کا پیش رو اور اس خاندان کی حکومت کا بانی تھا مسلمانوں کے اخلاق اور تہذیب و تمدن سے اس قدر متاثر ہوا کہ مسلمان ہو گیا اور اس کے ساتھ اپنے قبیلے کو بھی مسلمان بنایا۔ اس زبردست جنگجو اور طاقتور قبیلے نے غیر مسلم ترکوں سے قطع تعلق کر لیا ان کی برتری تسلیم کرنے سے انکار کر دیا اور مسلمان حکمرانوں سے برابر کے تعلقات پیدا کیے۔ سلجوقیوں نے خلافت عباسیہ کے زوال کے دنوں میں بغداد کی پوری پوری مدد کی اور خلافت کے ادارے میں جان ڈالتے رہے۔ آٹھویں صدی

عیسوی کے اخیر میں بلخ کا امیر سامان مسلمان ہو گیا۔ اسے مسلمان کرنے والا خراسان کا والی اسد بن عبد اللہ تھا۔ سامان نے اپنے مربی کی یادگار کے طور پر اپنے بیٹے کا نام اسد رکھا۔ یہی اسد سامانی خاندان کی سلطنت کا بانی تھا جس کی حکومت تقریباً سوا سو سال برقرار رہی اور اس خاندان سے اسلام کی عظمت میں اضافہ ہوا۔

پورا وٹلم شہر جو آتش پرستوں کا اہم مرکز تھا، ناصر الحق ابو محمد کی مساعی سے مسلمان ہو گیا۔ شہر وٹلم کے مشہور شاعر، جن کا اسلامی نام ابو الحسن مہ یار رکھا گیا، اپنے ہم عصر شاعر شریف رعنا کے ہاتھ پر مسلمان ہوئے۔ کابل کا بادشاہ خلیفہ مامون کے عہد میں مسلمان ہو گیا تھا مگر بدھ مذہب کا زور باقی رہا اور اس کے وارثوں میں سے کئی غیر مسلم تخت نشین ہوئے۔ چنانچہ ۸۷۸ء میں جب یعقوب بن لیث صفاری کابل پہنچا تو حاکم کو بٹ پرست پایا تھا۔ مگر اس کے بعد افغانستان میں اسلام کا احیاء شروع ہوا اور محمود غزنوی کے زمانے میں سارا ملک مسلمان ہو چکا تھا۔

(جاری ہے)

اگر شیخ رشید الدین میرے خاص ملازم کو کشتی میں ہر ادیں تو میں ایمان لے آؤں گا۔ یہ ملازم غیر معمولی ذیل ڈول کا تھا اور اتنا قوی تھا کہ ایک ہی جھٹکے میں اُونٹ کا دو سالہ بچہ گود میں اٹھا لیتا تھا۔ شیخ کی جسامت عام سی تھی اور غیر معمولی قوت بھی نہ رکھتے تھے۔ مگر آپ نے چیچ قبول کر لیا اور امیر سے کہا کہ اگر میں کشتی میں ہار گیا تو تمہیں مسلمان ہونے کے لئے نہ کہوں گا۔ تغلق تیمور خان اور دوسرے سرداروں نے شیخ کو مقابلہ کرنے سے منع کیا۔ مگر آپ نے کہا کہ میرا ایمان ہے کہ اگر اللہ تعالیٰ چاہتے ہیں کہ منگولوں کو نعمتِ اسلام سے سرفراز کریں تو وہ مجھے اتنی طاقت بخشیں گے کہ اس کافر کو ہرا دوں۔ الغرض مقابلہ طے ہو گیا اور سارا لشکر دیکھنے کے لئے پرے باندھ کر بیٹھ گیا۔ دونوں میدان میں اُترے۔ مصاحبِ خاص اپنی قوت کے گھمنڈ میں اتر اتر کر چل رہا تھا اور اس کے سامنے شیخ رشید الدین بہت کمزور اور بے حقیقت سے نظر آرہے تھے۔ مگر آپ نے آگے بڑھ کر اس کے سینے میں ایسی ضرب لگائی کہ اس کے ہوش اُڑ گئے اور اوسان آتے ہی پاؤں میں گر پڑا اور کلمہ طیبہ

شیخ سامنے آئے تو خان جھو کر بولا کہ تمہیں یہاں اس طرح آواز بلند کرنے کی ہمت کیسے ہوئی۔ شیخ نے اپنا تعارف کر لیا اور اپنے والد کی وصیت بیان کی۔ تیمور خان نے کہا کہ میں اپنا وعدہ بھولا نہیں ہوں بلکہ کئی مرتبہ میرے دل میں یہ خیال آچکا ہے کہ میں نے جس شخص سے وعدہ کیا تھا وہ ملنے نہیں آیا۔ اب آپ آگئے ہیں۔ مجھے مشرف بہ اسلام کریں۔

مشرف بہ اسلام ہو کر تغلق تیمور خان نے شیخ رشید الدین سے مشورہ کر کے یہ فیصلہ کیا کہ سرداروں کو فردا فردا بلا کر دعوتِ اسلام دی جائے۔ سب سے پہلے امیر طولک کو بلایا گیا۔ خان نے پوچھا کیا تم اسلام قبول کرتے ہو؟ امیر طولک یہ سن کر آبدیدہ ہو گیا اور بولا کہ میں تو تین سال ہوئے کاشغر کے ایک بزرگ کے ہاتھ پر اسلام لاچکا ہوں آپ کے خوف سے اظہار نہیں کرتا تھا۔ خان نے فرطِ مسرت سے امیر کو گلے لگالیا اور پھر تینوں نے بیٹھ کر باقی سرداروں سے یہی سوال کیا تمام سرداروں نے اسلام قبول کر لیا۔ صرف ایک سردار نے تامل کیا اور ایک جاہلانہ شرط پیش کی کہ

کر لوں اس وقت آپ لوگ آئیں اور مجھے مسلمان کر لیں۔ یہ وعدہ پختہ ہے۔

تیمور خان کو معاملاتِ سلطنت استوار کرنے میں کچھ وقت لگا۔ اس دوران شیخ جمال الدین اپنے وطن واپس آچکے تھے۔ پھر وہ سخت بیمار ہوئے اور جب دیکھا کہ آخری وقت آگیا تو اپنے صاحبزادے شیخ رشید الدین کو پوری تفصیل بتا کر وصیت کی کہ جب تغلق تیمور خان ہنگاموں سے

فارغ ہو کر اپنی سلطنت سنبھال لے تو اس سے جا کر ملیں اور میرانام لے کر اسے وعدہ یاد دلانیں۔ جب تغلق تیمور خان نے حکومت مستحکم کر لی تو شیخ رشید الدین اپنے والد بزرگوار کی وصیت کی تعمیل کے لئے تیمور خان کے کیمپ پہنچے۔ شاہی خیموں پر کرا پہرہ تھا۔ شیخ نے خان تک پہنچنے کی بہت کوشش کی مگر رسائی نہ ہو سکی۔ اسی تک وہ دو میں کئی دن گزر گئے۔ آخر ایک ترکیب سمجھ میں آئی۔ علی الصبح شاہی خیموں کے قریب پہنچ کر بلند آواز سے اذان دی جس سے خان کی آنکھ کھل گئی۔ وہ ناراض ہوا کہ یہ شور کیسا ہے اور کس نے کیا اور حکم دیا کہ اس آدمی کو فوراً حاضر کیا جائے۔

فارس کی اقلیم سے آرہے ہیں اور ہمیں علم نہیں تھا کہ اس شکارگاہ میں داخلہ ممنوع ہے۔ تیمور خان بدک کر یولا کہ فارس والوں سے تو کتے بہتر ہیں۔ شیخ نے بڑی متانت سے کہا کہ ”بے شک! اگر ہمیں دینِ حق میسر نہ ہوتا تو ہم کتوں سے بھی بدتر ہوتے۔“ یہ تیکھا جواب تیمور خان کے دل میں اتر گیا اور اس نے حکم دیا کہ شکار سے واپسی کے بعد شیخ کو پھر پیش کیا جائے۔

تیمور خان نے واپس آکر شیخ جمال الدین کو خلوت میں بلایا اور پوچھا کہ ”دینِ حق“ کیا ہے؟ آپ نے اسلام کے محاسن، دنیوی زندگی کی بے ثباتی، آخرت کی حیاتِ ابدی اور روزِ حساب کی سختی ایسے موثر پیرائے میں بیان کی کہ تیمور خان کو پسینہ آگیا۔ وہ اسلام کی حقانیت اور اس کی تعلیمات کی حکمت کا قائل ہو گیا۔ شیخ سے یولا کہ میرادل آپ کے دین کی تصدیق کرتا ہے۔ میں چاہتا ہوں کہ میرے ساتھ میرے قبائل اور رعایا کے لوگ بھی مسلمان ہو جائیں۔ مگر اس وقت میں مختلف معرکوں اور مہمات میں پھنسا ہوا ہوں۔ جب میں تمام معرکوں کی سرکوبی کر لوں اور حکومت مستحکم

یہ خوف بھی نہیں ہوتا کہ دین حق اختیار کر لینے سے انہیں کسی دنیاوی فائدے سے ہاتھ دھونے پڑیں گے۔ اس علاقے کی پہلی اہم شخصیت جو مسلمان ہوئی وہ کاشغر کے حکمران بغراخان کی تھی۔

بغراخان کے مشرف بہ اسلام ہونے کا واقعہ بہت عجیب ہے۔ سامانی خاندان کا ایک شہزادہ جن کو خواجہ ابو نصر سامانی کے نام سے یاد کیا جاتا ہے جاہ و حشم سے دستبردار ہو کر تبلیغ اسلام کی طرف راغب ہو گیا۔ وہ سوداگری کا مال لے کر ملک ملک کا دورہ کرتے تھے اور تجارت میں جو نفع ہوتا وہ بھی اسی کارِ خیر میں لگا دیتے تھے۔ ایک مرتبہ خواب میں حضور صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے انہیں ارشاد فرمایا کہ ترکستان جاؤ وہاں بغراخان تمہارا انتظار کر رہا ہے۔ بغراخان کو بھی خواب میں بشارت ملی کہ اس کی ہدایت کے لئے ایک شخص آرہا ہے اور وہ سیدھا راستہ بتائے گا۔ چنانچہ جب خواجہ ابو نصر، بغراخان کے پاس پہنچے تو اس نے بہت عزت اور احترام سے آپ کا استقبال کیا اور ان کے ہاتھ پر ایمان لے آیا۔ مگر بغراخان کے اٹھ جانے کے بعد کفار اور بت پرستوں کا پھر زور ہو گیا اور مسلمانوں کی قوت

کمزور پڑ گئی۔ چودھویں صدی عیسوی میں اس خطے میں کوئی اہم مسلمان حاکم یا سلطان باقی نہ رہا۔ کاشغر کا امیر چغتائی تغلق تیمور خان تھا۔ اسے اسلام سے دور کا بھی واسطہ نہ تھا۔ مگر اللہ تعالیٰ نے دین حق کی اشاعت کے اسباب دوبارہ پیدا کیے اور اس امیر کو مسلمان بنانے کی سعادت بخارا کے ایک اہل اللہ کو نصیب ہوئی۔ تغلق تیمور خان بیمار اور زبردست قائد تھا اور برابر اسی جدوجہد میں لگا ہوا تھا کہ اس خطے میں طوائف الملوکی ختم کر کے ایک مضبوط، مستحکم اور بااثر مرکزی سلطنت قائم کرے۔ ایک روز وہ اپنی خصوصی شکارگاہ میں تھا۔ وہاں اس نے ایک قافلے کو فروکش دیکھا۔ چونکہ اس کی شکارگاہ میں داخلہ ممنوع تھا اس لئے وہ بہت غصہ ہوا اور حکم دیا کہ سارے قافلے کو پابجولاں حاضر کیا جائے۔ قافلہ مختصر سا تھا۔ اس کے سالار شیخ جمال الدین بخاری ایک صاحب دل بزرگ تھے اور معیت میں ان کے کچھ معتقد اور مرید تھے۔ شیخ، تیمور خان کے سامنے پیش ہوئے تو اس نے پوچھا کہ تم لوگ کون ہو اور ہماری اجازت کے بغیر ہماری شکارگاہ میں کیوں داخل ہوئے ہو۔ شیخ نے جواب دیا کہ ہم

اشاعت اسلام (۵) وسط ایشیا، افغانستان

تحریر: دمی الحسن انصاری

۸۶ھ مطابق ۷۰۵ء میں قیتبہ بن مسلم کو خراسان کا وال بنا کر بھیجا گیا۔ وہ سمرقند پہنچا تو دیکھا کہ ہر سوبکدے بے ہوئے ہیں۔ بے عیسیٰ غفرت کے تقاضوں کے پیش نظر اس نے حکم دیا کہ بے عیسیٰ شہر کو پاک کر دیا جائے۔ پجاریوں نے خبردار کیا کہ ان بے عیسیٰ کو کسی نے ہاتھ لگایا تو شہر تباہ ہو جائے گا۔ قیتبہ بگڑ گیا اور ان کی توہم پرستی کو جھٹلانے کے لئے اپنے آدمیوں سے کہا کہ ان کھلونوں کو نذر آتش کر دو۔ جب مسلمان لشکریوں نے تعمیل کر دی اور لوگوں نے دیکھا کہ انیس کوئی نقصان نہیں پہنچا تو اپنے باطل عقیدے پر یوم ہوئے اور بہت سے لوگ ایمان لے آئے۔

اشاعت اسلام میں مسلمانوں نے ایک رکاوٹ یہ محسوس کی کہ مقامی لوگ عربی زبان سے بیکسر یا آشنا تھے۔ انہیں قرآن پاک پڑھنا مشکل ہوتا تھا اور نماز کے لئے چند آیتیں بھی یاد نہ کر سکتے تھے۔ چنانچہ انہیں اجازت دے دی گئی کہ جب تک وہ قرآن پاک کی آیات پڑھنے اور یاد کرنے پر قادر نہ ہو جائیں اس وقت تک نماز اپنی زبان میں ادا کرتے رہیں۔ مساجد میں نماز کے لئے حاضر ہونے والوں کی ہمت افزائی کی گئی اور مشہور ہے کہ تالیف قلب کے لئے انہیں انعامات بھی دیئے گئے۔

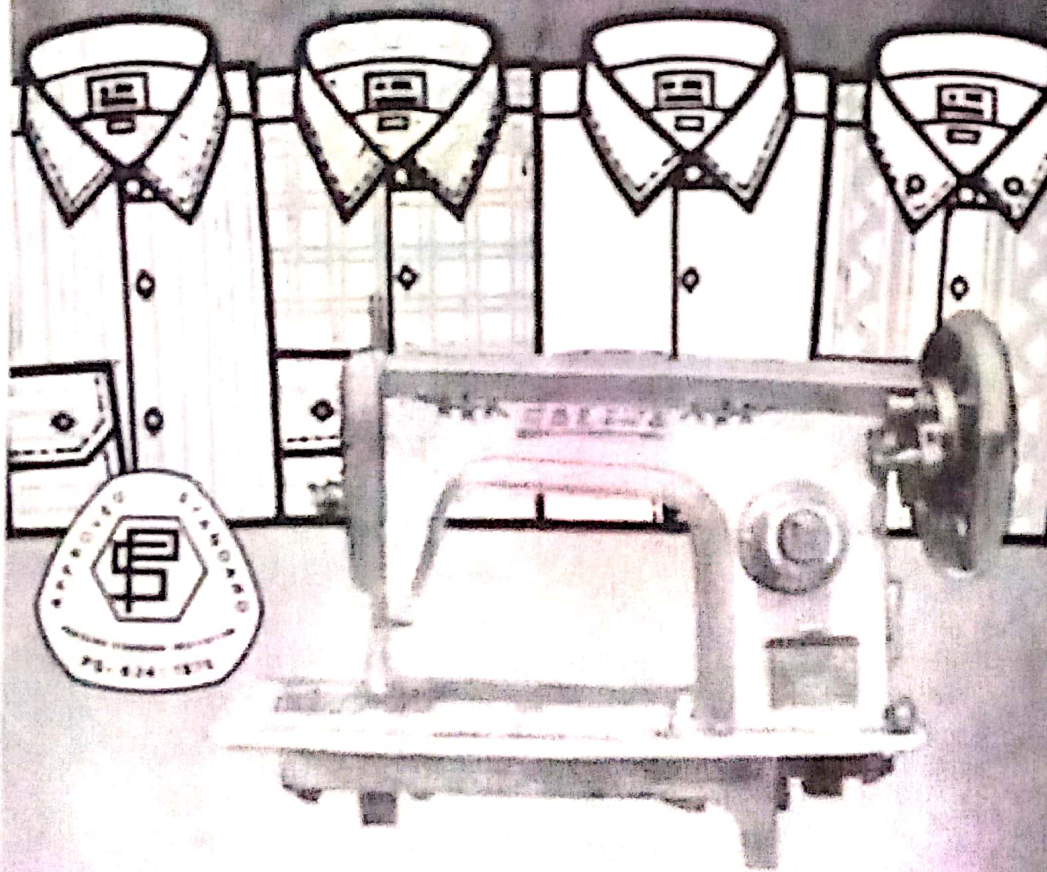
شیخ ابو اسید نے جو خلیفہ ہشام کے عہد میں سمرقند پہنچے، اشاعت اسلام کی تنظیم کی اور ان کی کوششوں سے جو ایک صدی میں بار آور ہوئیں اس خطے میں مسلمانوں کی تعداد بہت ہو گئی۔ علوم دینیہ کے مراکز بھی قائم ہو گئے لیکن ایمان لانے والے عموماً درمیانی اور نچلے طبقوں میں سے تھے۔ حقیقت بھی یہی ہے کہ دین حق قبول کرنے میں پہل نادار اور چھوٹے درجے کے لوگ کرتے ہیں۔ وہ اعلیٰ طبقوں کے ظلم اور استبداد کا شکار ہوتے ہیں اور انہیں

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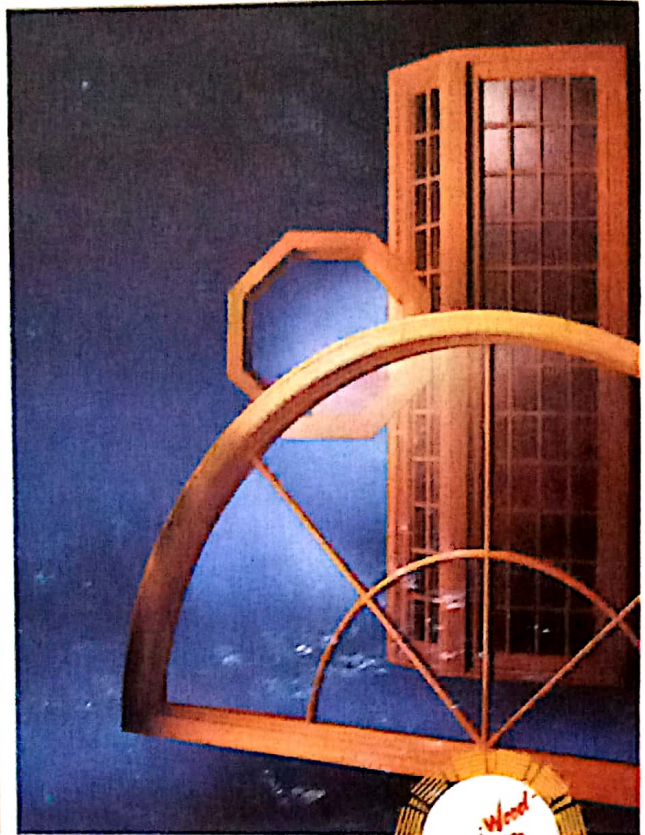
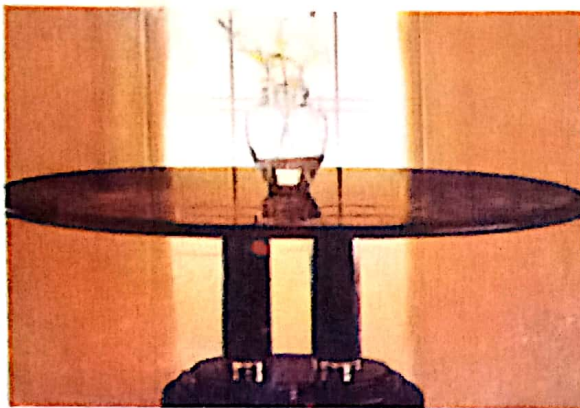
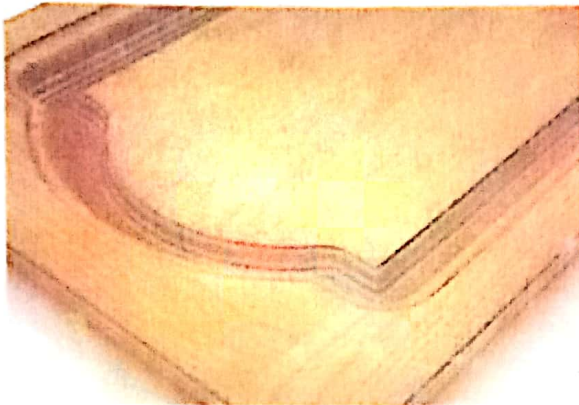


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